A

LETTER

TO

Father Lewis Sabran JESUITE,

In Answer to his LETTER to a PEER

OF THE

Church of England.

WHEREIN

The Postscript to the Answer to *NUBES TESTIUM* is vindicated.

And *F. SABRAN*'s Mistakes further discovered.

LONDON, Printed for *Henry Motlock* at the *Phœnix* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1688.

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Imprimatur,

A Letter to Father *Lewis Sabran.*

Nov. 25. 1687.

Guil. Needham R^mo in Christo P. D. Wilhelmo Archiepiscopo Cant. a Sacris Domest.

Reverend Sir;

SInce I am altogether a ſtranger to that Honourable Perſon, to whom your Letter is dedicated, I would not preſume to write my Vindication to his Lordſhip, but thought it more proper for me to addreſs this to your ſelf.

What I put down in a *Poſtſcript* in relation to your *Sermon* at *Cheſter*, hath, I perceive, given you no little diſturbance. I do not wonder at it, ſince few men are content or able to bear the juſteſt cenſure that can be paſt upon them.

But tho' I do not wonder at your diſpleaſure, yet I do very much at your attempt to vindicate your ſelf in a matter that is not capable of any defence, as I ſhall quickly ſhew you.

I intend *this Letter* for a Vindication of my ſelf to the world, as well as to you, and therefore will take leave to repeat what *you* ſaid in *that Sermon*, and *what* it was that I animadverted upon in my *Poſtſcript* to the *Anſwer* to the *Nubes Teſtium*.

In the *ſecond page* of your *Sermon* you have theſe words; *If I preſume not to preſent them*, [yours and your Auditours Prayers] *without taking along the joynt Interceſſion of the Mother of God, I follow therein the Advice of St.* Auguſtin, *which I addreſs to you in his words; Let us by the moſt tender Application of our whole heart, recommend our ſelves to the moſt Bleſſed Virgin's Interceſſion; let us all, with the greateſt eagerneſs, ſtrive to obtain her Protection; that whilſt with Aſſiduity we pay her our Devotions on Earth, ſhe may intreat for us in Heaven by her earneſt Prayers; for undoubtedly ſhe who brought forth the Price of Redemption, hath the greateſt Right to intercede for thoſe who are redeemed.*

This was the *paſſage* that I reflected upon there, ſince with a very little pains I found that *that Sermon* out of which you quoted *theſe expreſſions*, was not St. *Auſtins*, and therefore I ſaid in that *Poſtſcript* that *I could not but conclude you guilty either of great Ignorance, or of notorious diſingennity, who would aſcribe to the venerable St.* Auſtin *this Notorious Forgery.*

Theſe Expreſſions of my *Poſtſcript* I do ſtill own notwithſtanding your *Vindication*, and intend *this Letter* for a Defence of *them*, and a full Confutation of what you have ſo weakly and ſo unwarily offered towards the clearing of your ſelf.

You have prefaced *your Letter* to that Honourable Lord with ſome

hard words againſt the *Church of England* about her Reformation *by meer Lay-Authority*, about her want of *Succeſſion*, *Miſſion*, and about her *undermining one third part of the Apoſtles Creed*. I am ſo very deſirous to come to the *Controverſie* betwixt us, that I will only tell you here, that every word of what you have ſaid there againſt the *Church of England* is very falſe, and very abſurd.

You next make *two* or *three Reflections* upon my *Anſwer* to the *Compiler* of the *Nubes Teſtium*; I will paſs over theſe at preſent alſo, ſince I am not at leiſure here to defend *that Book*, and which is more, I need not againſt what *you* have ſaid there.

You next come to the Dividing of my *Accuſation* againſt you, and tell the World, I accuſe you *firſt of Ignorance in ſaying, you followed the Advice of St.* Auſtin, *when you recommended your ſelf to the Moſt Bleſſed Virgins Interceſſion.*

In Anſwer to which I muſt tell *you*, Sir, that *you* abuſe my words in dividing them into the charge of *Ignorance* about Uſing the *Interceſſion* of the Bleſſed Virgin, and *Diſingenuity* about quoting the *Sermon* as St. *Auſtins*. Your deſign I eaſily foreſee, which is to draw me into a Controverſy about *Invocation* of *Saints*, that ſo the heavy charge laid againſt *you* may be either dropt, or buried in a multitude of words about other things.

But to be plain with you, Sir, now you have drawn me into the field, I am reſolved not to be diverted with the throwing in of other matter about *Invocation*, which I have ſufficiently anſwered once already in my *Anſwer* to the *Compiler* of the *Nubes Teſtium*: I am reſolved to finiſh this diſpute about the *Sermon* of St. *Auſtin*, before I begin any other with *you*; When *you* have either cleared your ſelf, or owned your *obſtinate Miſtake*, then I ſhall be at your ſervice either in the *DEFENCE* of *my Book*, or of my *Mother* the *Apoſtolical Church* of *England*.

You muſt not be angry therefore if I throw aſide as nothing to the purpoſe of the *preſent Controverſy* what *you* have ſet down out of the *Nubes* from your *third* to your *ſixth* page, where I was glad to find that *you* did recollect with your ſelf that our diſpute was about *thoſe words* as taken out of the *thirty fifth Sermon* de Sanctis: *Which* I ſaid *could* not be St. *Auſtins*, but *you* are now reſolved to defend that *it* may.

As for my *Arguments*; you tell his Lordſhip that I borrow *ſome Proofs, of this Confident Aſſertion* [I ſuppoſe you mean of the *Sermons not being St.* Auſtins] *of* Alexandre Natalis, *and add one of my own contrivance.*

Since I am not acquainted with that *Honourable Lord*, I am afraid you will not do me the favour to tell that Lord from *me*, that what you ſay here is very falſe. I deſigned and drew up that Poſtſcript, and had it

Printed

Printed in half a day; I had not lookt into *Natalis Alexandre* of five weeks before, and which is more, neither looked for, or ever ſaw *one ſyllable* in *him* about *that*, or any other *Sermon* attributed to St. *Auſtin* that I remember. I muſt own that I have been acquainted with *Natalis Alexandre*, but it was meerly to find out the ſtealings of your *Pious* and *Learned Author* of the *Nubes Teſtium*, who as I have ſhewn in my *Anſwer*, did not only ſteal his *whole Book*, (excepting a ſmall paſſage or two) out of that *French Hiſtorian*, but ſtands excommunicated by this *preſent Pope* for his pains,

After your falſe account whence I had *my Proofs*, you come next to examine *them* ſingly.

My firſt was that *the Title*, *a Sermon on* [not *in* as you tranſlate the words] *the Feaſt of the Aſſumption does not at all agree to any thing that is near St.* Auſtins *time.*

You anſwer that there is *no conſequence* can be drawn from the *Title*, ſince the Title (as I ſuppoſe your meaning is) might have been afterwards added. But why, Sir, can there be no conſequence drawn hence; my deſign was not only from there being *no Feaſt of Aſſumption* then (which you grant) and therefore *no Sermon* could be Preached on that Solemnity, but from there being *no belief* of ſuch an *Aſſumption* then, and therefore a *Sermon* on *that ſubject*, which *this* evidently *is*, cannot be either St. *Auſtins*, or near *his time*, ſince there was *then* and *long after* not only *no Feaſt*, but *no belief* of any ſuch thing as the *Aſſumption* of the *Bleſſed Virgin.* But you endeavour to illuſtrate this ſhadow, or rather phantome of an *Anſwer* by an Inſtance. You tell his Lordſhip *St.* Auſtins *fourteenth Sermon* de Sanctis *is allowed by all to be his genuine work*, *the Title whereof*, *is in the Feaſt of all Saints*; *yet* that *the Inſtitution of that Feaſt was much later than that Sermon*, *which was made for*, *and preach'd in the Solemnity of a Virgin and Martyr.*

Surely Sir, you thought your putting *your name* and *your ſociety* to *your Letter* would fright *the nameleſs Author*, from daring to give one word of *Anſwer* to *that Letter*, and therefore that you might take the Liberty to ſay what you pleaſed in *it*. Without ſuch a ſuppoſition, I am not able to reſcue you from a more *odious Character*, than I am willing to mention: For this is one of the falſeſt paſſages I have met with in ſo few words. *You* ſay St. *Auſtins* 14*th Sermon de Sanctis is allowed by all to be his genuine work*: This is (give me leave to ſpeak out) very falſe: For the *Benedictines* of *Paris* (not to mention *our Authors*, whom I will not inſiſt on to prove againſt your ALL,) have thrown *this Sermon* into their (*a*) *Appendix* as *Spurious*, and ſhew that it is a *meer Cento*, made up of *pieces* of *Sermons*, borrowed here and there. *You* tell his Lordſhip next, that

(*a*) *Appendix ad Tom.* 5. *D. Auguſt. p.* 316. *Edit. Paris* 1683.

that the *Title of the Sermon, is in the Feast of all Saints.* This is as false as the other; for not onely in the *Louvain*, but in the *Benedictine*, as well as in *Erasmus*'s *Edition*, the *Title* of *this fourteenth Sermon*, is *in Festo Conversionis Sancti Pauli*, a Sermon *on the Feast of the Conversion* of *St. Paul*. I must confess Sir, that I was wholly astonished at your asserting these things with so *much assurance* to a *Peer*, and to a *Peer* also of the *Church* of *England*, and *without any truth*: I lookt again and again at *it*, and lest it might be an errour of the Press, I lookt into the *fourth*, into the *twenty fourth*, into the *thirty fourth*, into the *forty first*; I lookt also into the *two next Sermons* before and after this *fourteenth Sermon* de Sanctis, but no news could I find of *your Title* in any *one* of *those Sermons*, and therefore must lay *this mistake* to your *own charge*.

You lastly tell his Lordship, that this *fourteenth Sermon was made for, and preach'd in the solemnity of a Virgin and Martyr*; which is as *false* as either of the other, since *it* certainly was *made for*, and *preach't* upon St. *Pauls Conversion*.

You next tell his Lordship of a *far greater mistake in this my Objection, much to be wondered at in so great a pretender to reading, as if* (say you) *Feast*, or *day of Assumption in the Writings of Antients, did almost ever signify any thing else but the Day of a Saints Death*.

But pray, Sir, what is *that* to *this Sermon*, if the *day* of *Assumption* do not ever signify the *day* of a *Saints Death*, why may not *this* be the *exception*? but to pass that; you know very well that *that* cannot be the meaning here, since *this Sermon* speaks of *Assumption* of the *Blessed Virgin*; and that it was the *Churches Custom to believe that the Virgin Mary was on the day of that solemnity assumed into Heaven*.

But all this is but to raise a dust about nothing, for were the Argument from the *Title* as weak as you could desire, yet what follows in my *Postscript*, is more than strong enough to convince all reasonable men that *that Sermon* could not be St. *Austins*.

I next urged against *this Sermon*, that the *Benedictines* of *Paris* in *their* late *Edition* of St. *Austin had cast it into their Appendix as spurious, and that they told us that in their MSS. it wanted the name of any Author; but that the Divines of* Louvain *told us that in several Manuscripts, which they used in their Edition of St.* Austin, *this Sermon* de Sanctis *was intituled to* Fulbertus Carnotensis.

This Argument you were affraid to take together, and therefore without saying a word to the *Benedictine Manuscripts*, which name *no Author* for *that Sermon*, you think you answer the *Louvain* MSS. about its being intituled to *Fulbertus*, by saying St. *Ambrose* and *Chrysologus*'s *Sermons have appeared in MSS. under other Authors names*. But pray, Sir,

what

what would you prove from hence, becauſe ſuch a thing hath happened to St. *Ambroſe*, therefore *this Sermon* muſt be St. *Auguſtins*, becauſe printed among *his works*, tho' *it* bears not *his name* either in the M S S. uſed by the *Louvain Divines*, or by the *Benedictines*. How is it that we know one man's *Sermon's* from another's, is it not either from *his ſtyle*, or from its being attributed to ſuch a perſon by the *moſt* and *beſt Manuſcripts*? from one of theſe ways it is that St. *Ambroſe's* or any *other Father's Sermons* are vindicated to their *true Authors*. But both *theſe Arguments* are directly againſt this *Sermon's* being St. *Auſtins*; the *ſtyle* is *dull* and *heavy*, hath not any thing *like* or *near* the *briskneſs*, *wit*, and *great ſenſe* of St. *Auſtin*; and further the M S S. uſed by *them*, give it againſt *you*, they either intitle it to *no Author*, or to *Fulbertus Carnotenſis*.

Tho' my Arguments were not very weighty, yet what I next urged I thought would fully ſatisfy any ones ſcruples; I mean the *inſtance* of *Iſidores* being quoted in *it*, by which I ſaid *it was certain that this Sermon muſt be written after his time who lived in the beginning* of the *Seventh Century*.

What I ſay is *certain* here *you* tell his Lordſhip is *improbable*. You give *this* as *one reaſon*, becauſe the *Author* of *that Sermon* ſays *no Author among the Latins could be found*, *who* treating of our *bleſſed Ladies Death had been poſitive and expreſs*; whereas *Gregory* of *Tours* in the *Sixth Age hath a moſt full account of our bleſſed Ladies Aſſumption*, and therefore the *Author* of this *Sermon* muſt have lived before *Gregory*, and conſequently long before *Fulbertus*, or *Iſidore* of *Sevil*. But I do not ſee *this Conſequence*, it is no errour to ſuppoſe the *Author* of that *Sermon* had never ſeen *Gregory* of *Tours Book*, and therefore might have *that expreſſion concerning* no *Latin Author treating* of the *Virgin Maryes Aſſumption*: Or we may very well ſuppoſe that if *he* had, *he* reckons *his ſtory* among *thoſe Apocryphal ones* which were *then writ*, but *rejected* by the *Church of God*: And I cannot ſee how it ſhould be a fault in *Fulbertus* to reject *Gregory* of *Tours* (if *he* knew of *him*) as an *Apocryphal Author*, and not in St. *Bernard*, who ſo very long after either *doubted* or *disbelieved* (as you own in the *page* before *this*) the *Story* of the *Aſſumption*, notwithſtanding the *moſt full account of it* in *Gregory*; *whom* (with the *Author* of *this Sermon*) *he* either did not *know*, or did not regard.

Your Anſwer about St. *Iſidore* is very ſtrange, ſince tho' there were never ſo many *Iſidores* before St. *Auſtin*, yet can you, or dare you offer to ſhew that *any* of *them* were *Writers*? But to drive you from this *weak hold*, *we* are certain that the *Iſidore* quoted here is *he* that lived in the *ſeventh Century*. If *you* did look into the *Louvain Edition* when you wrote *your Letter*, *you* could not have miſt ſeeing *what book* of *his* the *paſſage* is taken *from*.

Put

But I am affraid, Sir, I have to do with *one*, who is reſolved to carry things by his own wild gueſſes more than by examining things fairly. The paſſage in the *Sermon* is in *Iſidor's Book de Vita & Morte Sanctorum.* (*b*) So that all your dreams are vaniſhed; and this *one paſſage* enough to have antwered your *whole Letter*. I ſhall therefore be ſhorter with the *reſt*, and tell you that your ſleighting the Judgment of the *Louvain Divines*, and the *preſent Learned Benedictines* at *Paris*, eſpecially when invincibly ſtrengthened by *this paſſage* from *Iſidore*, and your believing *this Sermon* to be St. *Auſtins*, becauſe *Thomas Aquinas* believed it to be *his*, diſcovers (pardon the expreſſion) a very unbecoming obſtinacy; You cannot but have heard how little a *Critick Monſieur Launoy* hath ſhewn *Aquinas* was, what *forged Authorities* he uſed and urged as from S. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*; whereas there was no *ſuch things* in *his works*. This *inſtance*, which you make uſe of for *your defence*, is an *evidence* as well againſt *him* as *you*, however far more excuſable in *him* than in *you*, ſince *he* lived in ſuch times of *Ignorance*, and you in times ſo learned; I am very confident that had *he* ſeen how much is now ſaid againſt *this Sermon*, *he* would have been far from acting like *you*, or have been obſtinate in the *defence* of ſuch a noted forgery.

(*b*) *Iſidor. de Vita & Mor te SS. n.* 68. *p.* 168. *Edit. Paris* 1580.

I have but room left to tell you that the *Louvain Divines* are of *no Authority* with *me* except where *their reaſons* are apparently good; and therefore ſhould *they* have *aſſerted* the 18th *Sermon de Sanctis* to have been St. *Auſtins* (as you ſay *they* do) I ſhould not upon good reaſons aſſent unto them; but that what you ſay here is falſe, is evident from *that note* ſet by *them* before *this Sermon, that ſome attribute this Sermon to Fulgentius*: and the *Benedictines* of *Paris* are ſo far from *your words*, that *they* ſay the *Louvain Divines leave it as* DUBIOUS: And *they* for their parts have caſt it into the *Appendix* as *Spurious*, and give this reaſon for *it* among others, that *it is the work* of *ſome ignorant botcher*, who hath patched it up out of *ſtolen Sentences*: So that *your quotation* for *Invocation* thence ought to be ſleighted by that *honourable Lord* as much as your *other* in the *Sermon* before the *Court* at *Cheſter*,

* *Append. ad Tom.* 5. *p.* 321.

Thus, Sir, I have given you the trouble of a *Letter*; if you intend a *further Vindication* of your ſelf, pray oblige me ſo far as to haſten it out, that ſo I may ſtay no longer for *it*, than you have done for *this*. One thing you may oblige me in further, and that is not onely to *quote*, but to *look* into thoſe Authors you make uſe of. This will prevent the *multiplying* of the *Controverſy*; tho' you be reſolved to continue *this* any longer againſt

Reverend Sir your Friend
in all Chriſtian Offices.

FINIS.